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Security Council

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Provisional

4067th Meeting

Friday, 12 November 1999, 11.40 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Türk	(Slovenia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Fonseca
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sergeev
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

99-86448 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burundi, Finland, Norway and the United Republic of Tanzania in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) took a seat at the Council table; Ms. Rasi (Finland), Mr. Kolby (Norway) and Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahima Fall.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): Since the Secretariat's previous briefing of the Security Council, given last 22 October during informal consultations, the basic situation regarding the peace process in and around Burundi has not changed. The process remains at a very critical stage. It gives rise to little optimism, on the one hand, internally, because of political tensions, insecurity and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, and on the other hand, externally, because of the political vacuum created by the death of the Facilitator, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

With the Council's permission, I would like to focus this briefing on these two facets: the internal situation and the situation with regard to the Arusha process.

The internal situation remains disturbing both at the political level and at the levels of security, economy and humanitarian issues. At the political level Burundi is facing a worrisome internal crisis, and the political partnership is faced with serious difficulties that threaten its very survival. The fragmentation within the Front pour la démocratie au Burundi (FRODEBU) certainly poses a great threat to the partnership.

We are now observing a hardening of positions that recalls in many ways the situation during the period before the partnership. It seems there are now two opposing camps that have different views about how to pursue the Arusha process. The first of these camps is asking in particular that the negotiations take place outside of Tanzania and is requiring that priority be given to ending the hostilities. The other camp is accusing the Government of being at the root of the current hardening of positions and of seeking to divide the political groups so as to perpetuate the status quo. This second camp is lobbying for the continuation of discussions at Arusha under regional supervision.

The Government and the Parliament, initiators, creators and actors in the national partnership for peace, no longer seem to be on the same wave length and apparently no longer subscribe to the guidelines established by the agreement on the political platform of the transitional regime.

This polarization of positions also risks affecting the upcoming series of negotiations, which might become an arena for confrontation without concessions between the delegations, which would have the predictable result of further delaying the signing of a final Arusha agreement.

On top of this internal political situation, marked by a hardening of positions, the security situation remains uncertain, volatile and above all disturbing. Just to give one illustration, for about 10 days now various districts of Bujumbura have been subject to half a dozen attacks that have led to deaths, fires and looting. Such acts of violence have also been occurring with regularity in the

provinces of Muramvya, Cibitoke, Kayanza, Ngozi and Bubanza. Numerous attacks and ambushes have been carried out since the beginning of the month in these various regions. Recently, this generalized insecurity has been heightened by another worrisome problem: the departure of many Burundians for Tanzania, where they will swell the ranks of refugees, already estimated at more than 300,000 people.

An integral element of this security situation is the policy of *regroupement*. This policy of *regroupement* affects approximately 830,000 people today. The Government maintains that it has no other option for protecting civilians, isolating them from the rebellion and securing the capital. It claims that the situation is improving in protected areas, which it wishes to reduce while returning peasants to their land.

In fact, conditions in the camps are deeply worrying. Since mid-September, some 304,000 people have been regrouped into 58 *regroupement* camps, where health care and food are deplorable, when they are available at all. Some 20 sites have been visited and 183,168 people have received some humanitarian assistance. In fact, however, we have very little information about the other camps, which are inaccessible because of either their security situation or, in the case of 13 such sites, their location. Again, as I have said, we cannot speak today of only 304,000 people who have been regrouped in the 58 *regroupement* camps to which I have referred. The total number is estimated to be 830,000.

The disastrous situation of these 830,000 people further deteriorated when humanitarian activities were stopped by the implementation of phase IV following the tragic incident at Muzyie, in which two of our colleagues were murdered. In addition to the suspension of humanitarian activities, projects financed by the United Nations system have also been curtailed, aggravating a very disturbing and precarious socio-economic situation. Last week, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations drew the international community's attention to the threat of famine in Burundi posed by drought and by peasants' difficulties in reaching their fields.

The United Nations Children's Fund is deeply concerned over the situation of women and children in Burundi. Thirty health centres have been closed and destroyed and the remaining 287 are hardly able to provide the most basic services. Women's health indicators in Burundi are among the lowest in the continent. Half of all children are not vaccinated against the measles and more than a third are not protected against polio, diphtheria or tetanus. One child in five suffers malnutrition. In Bujumbura alone, AIDS has orphaned over 45,000 children, and almost half of all children of primary-school age do not attend.

The United Nations and the international community must consider how to help the people, even in the course of phase IV of the United Nations security system. But if the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, are to provide such assistance, it is absolutely essential that insecurity cease hindering the free movement of humanitarian personnel and that all parties to the conflict — and I emphasize all parties — respect the neutrality and work of those who are risking their lives to help the people of Burundi.

So much for the situation within Burundi. As to the situation outside the country, as I mentioned earlier, the death of Mwalimu Nyerere on 14 October created a dangerous political vacuum. The Arusha peace process has ground to a halt. Several initiatives have been undertaken. President Benjamin Mkapa has sent mediation emissaries to countries of the region, seeking support for continued negotiations. Having obtained this support, the mediation organized, immediately following Mr. Nyerere's funeral, a series of consultations in Dar-es-Salaam from 25 to 30 October. The Government, UPRONA and the National Assembly of Burundi did not attend, having predicated their participation on the nomination of a new Mediator.

According to information received in recent days, the mediation foresees the resumption of the work of the four committees in Arusha as of 15 November. This resumption is predicated on the convening of the summit planned by President Museveni, who currently chairs the regional initiative for peace in Burundi. The proposed dates for the summit vary, but that of 17 November is most often heard. The meeting is to be held in Arusha. The sole item on its agenda would be the naming of a new Mediator for the peace negotiations. We have learned today that the summit has been postponed because of the inability of some participants to attend.

The Burundian Government, for its part, has requested assistance from the Secretary-General and the international community in seeking mediation. The Government has taken some steps. It would wish to see a South African Mediator, though some parties to the

conflict, FRODEBU and CNDD in particular, have rejected that option.

One may already note, however, the broad consensus that seems to be emerging among the Burundi parties and the countries of the region that some mediation mechanism must be established as soon as possible. What remains to be decided is if this is to be a single Mediator or a college of mediators. It would also seem that there is consensus that negotiations ought to continue on the basis of what has already been achieved through Arusha.

As the Secretariat announced at the last briefing, the Secretary-General asked Mr. Prendergast to visit the region early this month to seek the views of the main actors on the steps to be taken to pursue the peace process and to consider, along with the United Nations, what the international community can do to move the peace process forward. As members of the Council know, just before visiting the region, Mr. Prendergast chaired a meeting here in New York attended by all the special envoys of the United Nations, the United States, other countries and the Organization of African Unity involved in the issue of Burundi. The work of this meeting indicated that the situation within and outside Burundi was precarious and that the United Nations must act urgently to ensure that the peace process continue.

Mr. Prendergast is currently continuing his mission, which he began in early November by going to Ethiopia, where he met with the Secretary-General of the OAU and governmental authorities. He then went to Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and he is currently in South Africa. His mission should end on 16 November, after which he will submit his report to the Secretary-General and will be available to the Security Council to brief it on the outcome of his mission. Therefore, today's meeting is very timely. I am glad that the Security Council can, through its political and moral influence, unequalled at the international level, have a positive effect on the course of events.

The President: I thank Mr. Fall for his comprehensive and very substantive, useful briefing.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Burundi, on whom I now call.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to address the Security Council. Since I am doing so for the first time, please allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of this very prestigious Council, which is so important in watching over peace throughout the world. I also express my best wishes to all the members of the Council and wish them every success in their heavy but noble responsibilities.

The Government of Burundi highly appreciates the commitment of the United Nations, through the Security Council, to peace in our country, which has been afflicted by recurring violence since independence, particularly since 1993, when the country experienced the most serious crisis in its history.

I do not wish today to go into the history of what has been called the Burundi disease. Rather, my aim is to explain to the Council and others present in this Chamber the main current concerns in Burundi.

First, regarding the peace process, it can be said that from an internal and external standpoint real progress has been made, even though the time limits set by both the Government and the facilitation process have not been respected. The Burundi conflict is so complex and the resentments are so deep that it is best to advance slowly but surely. In any event, peace in Burundi will be the result of a process, and it is important to properly define the causes of the ills and to prescribe well-considered solutions.

The death of His Excellency Mwalimu Nyerere, the Facilitator of the inter-Burundi talks, has slowed the momentum of the peace negotiations. The Government has addressed a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations asking him to contribute to finding a new facilitator as soon as possible. It has outlined the profile of the new facilitator needed in Burundi, and has even specified the criteria for choosing such a key figure. We hope that the consultations to be held among the heads of State of the region, in which the Government of Burundi very much hopes to be involved, as well as the tour of the region now being made by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Kieran Prendergast, will promptly provide us with the name of a facilitator.

The various Burundi parties, the region, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations are all asked to act promptly. We hope that the new facilitator will then tackle the priority problem, bringing about the cessation of hostilities, which is the major concern of the Burundi Government, as it is of the international community. In meeting the challenge, the people of Burundi must be, as they are, those principally

involved. The armed factions that consider themselves to have been excluded from the Arusha negotiations, and to be the real combatants on the ground, must also be involved. The Government of Burundi has always advocated inclusive negotiations, excluding no one, especially not those who have an immediate impact on the ground. Therefore, the hostilities must be ended, in order to create a climate conducive to the pursuit of negotiations, for the lasting solution to the Burundi conflict is political.

Secondly, what is the state of security? Generally, the situation is more or less normal, with the exception of rural Bujumbura, where ambushes are still seen on the routes to and from the capital, and with the exception of the provinces of the south-east, where fighting is once again causing a flow of refugees towards Tanzania.

Since the beginning of the crisis we have been drawing attention to the contribution of the neighbouring countries to the return of security and peace to Burundi. The rebels have bases within the country and outside it. More seriously, they are now in collusion with genocidal Rwandan elements, the Interahamwe and the former Rwandan armed forces. In the light of the implementation of the Lusaka Accords, they have begun to move back towards Burundi, either directly or through Tanzania, in order to sow death and devastation, now that they have acquired a larger arsenal. If the international community is not careful, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo could further complicate an already tense situation in the entire subregion.

Thirdly, I would like to say something about *regroupement* of the population. The Government of Burundi, after much hesitation, decided to regroup the population of the region of rural Bujumbura in what are today called "protection areas". This followed the worsening of violence against the populations in the hills, on the roads and in the suburbs of the capital. To avoid having these populations caught in a crossfire, the Government, faced with a military operation of broad scope, was obliged to regroup the people in 10 different areas. The *regroupement* was not forced, as has been said; it responded to a real concern of the population, and the duty to respond was the Government's — and only the Government's. If it had not responded, those who today accuse it of displacing populations would condemn it for not having protected those populations. It was also necessary to protect the capital, where not only Burundians but many foreigners live, and where the inhabitants were extremely tense and might have yielded to the temptation of selective violence, such as that experienced in 1995-1996.

This is therefore not a deliberate policy on the part of the Government; it is a provisional measure which has proven itself in other provinces, which are today in a state of security. Like childbirth for a mother, whose delivery always follows a painful time, the *regroupement* of populations is a painful operation, but it is one that also bears hope.

Concerns of a humanitarian nature are thus legitimate. The Government is aware of this. It is prepared to organize assistance, but since its means are limited, it has requested international assistance. Unfortunately, that assistance is today jeopardized by the application of phase IV, which limits the movement and actions of humanitarian workers in the country, following the dreadful murder of two United Nations personnel on a humanitarian mission in the south of the country.

Nonetheless, certain non-governmental organizations are now organizing themselves to resume the delivery of assistance, with the improvement of security conditions precisely following the *regroupement* of the populations, among other things. The Government has given the strongest security guarantees to all those who want to go to the field, either to provide assistance or to bear witness, such as human rights workers, journalists, and so forth. We ask the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations working in the humanitarian sphere not to become discouraged but to continue to come to the assistance of those who need it. The Government is doing everything within its power so that all these families can soon go back to their homes.

Fourthly, I wish to address the question of the protection of humanitarian workers. This is also an extremely important concern for the Government, and as I have just said, the Government held — and continues to hold, when there are new elements — discussions with all of those involved as to the best way of providing protection for the humanitarian staff.

Regarding the enquiry into the circumstances of the death of the two United Nations staff members, I wish to inform the Security Council that a judicial commission has been established and that it is to submit the results of the enquiry to the Government by the end of the month of November. The Council will be promptly informed.

In fact, I have before me a letter from the Minister of Justice to the Public Prosecutor to the Court of the Appeals, dated 4 November 1999, reporting that a commission has just been established. The Minister has written:

> "I believe that at the investigation stage it is vital to complete the report that was made by pursuing the investigation further to deepen the enquiry. It is urgent that the responsibility for these reprehensible murders be clearly established."

The Minister continues by saying that in order to respond to this concern, he has decided to establish another ad hoc, strengthened commission to conduct this work. The Minister asks that the needed resources be made available to the commission, which is to be devoted exclusively to this work until the enquiry is completed, which should be by 30 November 1999. This is what I can tell you, Sir, in this respect.

Fifthly, and lastly, I wish to touch upon the economic and social situation. It is deplorable. In fact, with the suspension of the regional embargo in January 1998, the Burundians had breathed a sigh of relief. But, unfortunately, this was not long-lived, because those who had helped us to bring pressure to bear on the region did not want to resume cooperation with Burundi until the peace agreement was signed, they said. This is an attitude which is startling, to say the least, because the problems afflicting us are even more painful today.

The national economy is on the verge of collapse. The currency has depreciated more than 100 per cent, and inflation is striking terribly at those who are the most destitute. There is reason to fear social upheaval, which could destroy all hopes of the peace process. And this could cast the fate of the country into the hands of extremist groups.

The Government has already presented a peace plan to the other parties, and it is a text which is a real compromise, arrived at by the broader-based Government and the National Assembly, itself broadened to include the various political parties and civil society. This political partnership for peace deserves to be supported, especially since through negotiations it is involved in negotiations specifically with the armed and unarmed outside opposition to arrive at an overall peace agreement on which future transition institutions will base themselves to prepare a state of law respectful of human rights and of democratic freedoms.

In conclusion, it is true that the situation in Burundi remains a matter of concern. The solution will come from the people of Burundi themselves, but also from understanding and support on the part of neighbouring countries and the rest of the international community. We hope that our partners will accompany the process towards a definitive peace. Their contribution will be greatly appreciated and most effective if only they help the Burundians themselves to find the solutions that suit them.

Mr. Sergeev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In assessing the developments in Burundi, we are disturbed that with the vacuum in the Arusha peace process, because of the death of Julius Nyerere, there has been an increase in violence in the country, and the civilian population is suffering therefrom. We are indeed disturbed over the actions of extremists; in October, persons from international humanitarian organizations were their victims.

Russia has consistently advocated a solution to the internal conflict in Burundi by peaceful means, through talks involving all parties involved. We strongly condemn the attacks by armed groups on Bujumbura and other populated areas, leading to the death of peaceful civilians. We are also disturbed over the continuing practice of forced *regroupement* of civilians into camps guarded by the military. We consider the use of terrorist methods to achieve political ends as inadmissible, and we confirm the need for a settlement of the internal political problems of Burundi through dialogue and strict respect for human rights.

We call on all Burundi sides to refrain from violence which could torpedo the hard-won gains made in the Arusha peace process. The continuing tense situation in Burundi requires the adoption of measures to encourage talks involving all political forces in that African country. Confirming our view that the main responsibility for peace in Burundi lies with the Burundian people themselves, we call for an intensification of efforts to achieve this goal within Burundi itself, and also at the international, and particularly the subregional, levels. It is our hope that the leaders of countries in the region will be able to take decisions which will lead to a settlement of the crisis situation.

We believe that there is real potential for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Burundi and that that potential is to be found in the process that was, until recently, headed by the late President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. In this connection, we believe the most important need now is for the regional leaders, in close cooperation with the United Nations, to decide as soon as possible on an international Facilitator acceptable to all the Burundi parties.

We hope that in future inter-Burundi talks, there will be a real breakthrough in the key issues of the settlement and, above all, in ending violence in the country. Our delegation believes that over the long term this will make it possible to have balanced and final documents signed.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) *(spoke in Chinese):* The Chinese delegation would first of all like to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging this timely open meeting so that the Security Council can discuss the situation in Burundi and hear the views of the membership at large.

We would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Fall for his comprehensive briefing.

The recent situation in Burundi is disturbing. Conflicts continue; the Arusha peace negotiations have reached a stalemate; the untimely death of the Facilitator, Mr. Nyerere, further complicated the situation; and poverty and lack of security have resulted in a huge outflow of refugees, making the humanitarian situation all the graver.

The murder of United Nations staff members has resulted in a curtailment of United Nations activities in Burundi. We condemn the killing of the innocent.

We would welcome measures taken by the Government of Burundi to ensure the safety and protection of international relief agency personnel. There is widespread concern that the tragic 1994 Rwanda massacre will recur.

The Chinese delegation believes that even though the situation in Burundi has not reached crisis level, the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council should learn from the lessons of the past and should give the situation its full attention before it deteriorates to the point of no return.

Timely measures should be taken to promote the peace process, and we are pleased to note that the United Nations, in cooperation with the parties concerned, is actively pursuing diplomatic efforts to save the deadlocked peace process.

The Chinese delegation supports the effort to restart the Arusha peace process and to promote the peace process in Burundi. We appreciate the contribution made by countries to this end. Furthermore, we hope that a new mediator acceptable to all States will be found quickly and will continue to lead the Arusha peace process.

We would also like to emphasize that a negotiated political settlement is the only way to restore peace and reconciliation. Any military action can only waste the results achieved in the peace process and bring more suffering for the Burundi people.

The Arusha peace negotiations are at a critical juncture. The various parties in Burundi should cease hostilities and return to the negotiating table so that an agreement can be reached at an early date in a spirit of reconciliation.

Poverty is the most fundamental cause of unrest. The unstable political situation in Burundi is directly linked to the severe economic situation. We call on the international community and donor countries to provide more generous economic assistance. President Buyoya plans to visit China soon, at which time the two countries will exchange opinions on international questions of common concern and bilateral relations. As always, China will, within its means, provide support to the peace process in Burundi.

We need to point out that peace and stability in Burundi depend on the peace and stability of the Great Lakes region. The region has always been plagued with disaster and ethnic genocide. Armed groups cross borders, and illegal weapons abound. The unrest and conflict among countries are intertwined and interactive. Therefore, the international community must commit itself to settling the unrest in the Great Lakes region as a whole. Only in this way can the safety and stability of every country in the region be guaranteed.

In conclusion, I should like to express our appreciation to the countries that have supported and assisted the peace process in Burundi. In particular, we wish to pay tribute to the late Mr. Nyerere, and we hope that Burundi will achieve peace and reconciliation so that he may rest in peace.

The President I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: We wish to express our special gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the situation in Burundi. We believe it is necessary to raise the awareness of the international community regarding the problems in that country. Our comments reflect a sincere wish to encourage all the parties to find a peaceful, negotiated and inclusive solution that gives real protection to the rights, interests and legitimate aspirations of the people of Burundi in its entirety. In this context, we wish to express thanks for, and associate ourselves with, the comments made by Mr. Ibrahima Fall at the beginning of the meeting.

The first step towards peace is the immediate cessation of attacks on the civilian population by the armed groups. These attacks are a clear violation of international law. At the same time, we must express our concern at forced displacements of the rural population carried out by the Government. Once again, Mr. Fall's words describe a situation that is particularly delicate, above all in the light of the interruption of humanitarian and food assistance in the *regroupement* camps.

We believe that both the internal partnership between the Government and the National Assembly and the Arusha process are structures of negotiation and dialogue that must be preserved and extended in spite of all the challenges. Otherwise, the political space would be taken over by the extremists, and the moderate forces, Hutu and Tutsi alike, would be marginalized.

A part of the work has already been accomplished. The Arusha process, under the leadership of Julius Nyerere until his recent death, had begun to yield its first fruits. We consider it to be of priority that the States of the region, with the cooperation of the United Nations, choose a new mediator — an African personality of prestige and acceptable to all the parties. In order to be effective, the Arusha process must be open to those parties that have shown, or are prepared to show, their commitment to a peaceful solution to the conflict without unjustified exclusions or deliberate self-exclusion. In this context, we value the renewed commitment of the Government of Burundi to achieve a negotiated and comprehensive solution.

The humanitarian situation is a subject of utmost concern to us. The statistics on malnutrition, infant mortality, access to basic services and health services for a large part of the population, the difficulties of daily life in the *regroupement* camps and the large number of refugees require no further comment on our part. The international community cannot remain indifferent and must act generously.

At the same time, another subject of constant concern to us is the situation of United Nations and humanitarian personnel working in Burundi. Their safety, freedom of movement and status must be guaranteed by all the parties. In this context, we reiterate our condemnation of the attacks against United Nations personnel committed in Rutana on 12 October. We trust that the investigation ordered by the Government of Burundi will make it possible to bring those responsible to justice.

The causes of the conflict in Burundi are complex; they are not related solely to ethnic tension, and they transcend the political issue. The economic crisis is also at the heart of the problem, and cannot be ignored. We must find the appropriate mechanisms to resume economic assistance to the people of Burundi and to maintain their faith in the peace process.

The question of Burundi cannot be separated from the regional context. Peace and democratic institutions in Burundi will be strengthened by the consolidation of the rule of law in all the countries of the Great Lakes region. We also do not believe that the problems affecting the region are exclusively political or security-related, or that they can be resolved in isolation. We therefore agree with the idea of France to convene an international conference on the Great Lakes region, when the appropriate circumstances exist and under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. In this regard, the information to be given to us by Ambassador Prendergast upon his return from the region will be extremely useful.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to one of the great men of Africa and of contemporary political history — former President Nyerere of Tanzania, who to his last breath fought for the cause of freedom, tolerance and respect for human dignity in Africa and throughout the world. We trust that his example will enlighten his successor in the Arusha process, a process which Mr. Nyerere helped to build with such dedication and effort.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me.

I would like to inform the members of the Security Council and others participating in its work that there is a large number of speakers on my list. It is the intention of the President to suspend the meeting at 1 p.m. and to resume at 3 p.m.

Ms. Soderberg (United States of America): The United States Government is gravely concerned over the delays in the peace process in Burundi. We have seen an upsurge in attacks on civilian targets and increased suffering of the civilian population. Attacks in and near the capital have taken place, and hard-liners who oppose the peaceful resolution of Burundi's conflict are trying to derail a broad-based negotiating process that offers the country's best hope for lasting peace. There is a sizeable constituency for peace in Burundi, and we need to use this opportunity to ensure that the peace process goes forward. We commend the peacemakers for their good will.

The United States shares the international community's concern about the violence and its effect on the Government and civilians and on the overall peace process. Counter-insurgency efforts now include the so-called *regroupement* of 340,000 people near the capital, an act we consider to be a major human rights violation and a matter of serious humanitarian concern.

We share the shock and the grief of the Secretary-General and the international community over the recent killing in Rutana Province of the head of the United Nations Children's Fund in Burundi and of a World Food Programme logistics officer. This outrageous act has dealt a severe blow to humanitarian efforts carried out by the United Nations and other agencies. Some agencies have suspended operations in the wake of this incident. We urge that those responsible be brought to justice.

The Security Council should endorse the immediate resumption of the peace process under a successor to the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. We all mourn his passing, and in his memory we must recommit ourselves to his goal of peace in the Great Lakes region.

The Security Council must condemn the violence that undermines the negotiations. The United Nations must reassert its leadership in protecting the rights of individuals, and should provide guidance and direction for non-governmental organizations operating in Burundi. However, United Nations field operations should not resume without the necessary guarantees. It is absolutely essential that all sides in the conflict respect the neutrality, freedom of movement and security of United Nations and other international workers.

The United States urges the Security Council to call for the resumption of negotiations, with a facilitator acceptable to those Burundian parties that have entered into the process; affirm the Arusha process as the basic framework within which all-party negotiations should continue, recognizing that the process is best served by a flexible, efficient approach acceptable to the Burundi parties themselves; condemn continuing violence and appeal to warring parties to come to the negotiating table; affirm the urgent need for States of the region to do everything possible to halt all cross-border insurgent activity and to ensure that refugee camps are not used as training and resupply bases for insurgent forces; call for the dismantling of the recently established *regroupement* camps and demand full and unhindered access of international humanitarian workers and human rights observers while this is taking place; and, finally, recognize Burundi's desperate economic situation and call for the donor community to expand economic assistance and deliver needed help as soon as possible.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Violence and instability continue to plague Burundi, with tragic consequences for the civilian population and the subregion as a whole. The Arusha peace process remains the best hope to bring that violence and instability to an end. Allow me to reaffirm at the outset my Government's continued strong support for that process.

The Arusha peace process suffered a serious setback with the death of its Facilitator, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. We join others in expressing deep regret at his death, and we pay tribute to his valuable contribution to peace and national reconciliation in Burundi.

A new facilitator must be named soon if we wish to maintain the momentum generated by the negotiations to date and the commitment of the parties to the process. We encourage the Secretary-General to use his good offices to help to identify an appropriate successor to Mwalimu Nyerere as facilitator of the Burundi peace process.

Canada welcomes the appointment of Mr. Ayité Jean-Claude Kpakpo as the new Senior United Nations Adviser to the facilitator of the Burundi peace process. A further enhancement of the role of the United Nations in the Burundi peace process may also be advisable. In this respect, Canada encourages the Secretary-General to

consider nominating a special representative for Burundi to support the peace process and contribute to coordinating humanitarian activities.

(*spoke in English*)

The humanitarian situation with respect to Burundi remains grim. We very much share Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall's concern over the growing reports of numbers of Burundi refugees fleeing continuing fighting between rebels and Government forces in Burundi. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees staff in the United Republic of Tanzania registered 7,000 new Burundi refugees in October and 2,650 in the first week of November. These are in addition, of course, to the approximately 300,000 refugees from Burundi already resident in Tanzania and the over 800,000 internally displaced persons within Burundi itself. There is, unfortunately, no reason to believe that these refugee flows will subside anytime soon. Further increases in the numbers of refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania stand to feed the growing tensions between the Burundi refugees and the local Tanzanian population. We are also deeply concerned at the reports of forced displacements, even if for defensive reasons, of Burundi civilians into camps in Bujumbura, where access by humanitarian personnel is restricted and where the population lacks access to adequate water, food and shelter.

The human rights situation also continues to give cause for concern. The report of the Special Rapporteur on Burundi to the Commission on Human Rights notes massacres, disappearances, and arbitrary arrests and detention. We call upon all parties to the conflict to end the cycle of violence and indiscriminate killing, and on the Government of Burundi in particular to take measures to end impunity for those who commit such acts.

The prevailing environment of insecurity seriously inhibits the ability of humanitarian personnel to assist populations in need. In the past two months nine humanitarian workers, including United Nations personnel, have been killed in Burundi. All parties to the conflict share responsibility for the safety and security of humanitarian staff. We therefore call on all those parties to provide concrete assurances that they will indeed ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of all humanitarian personnel. Furthermore, we insist that the conditions necessary for a resumption of humanitarian assistance be restored.

Wider instability in the region continues to impair peace efforts in Burundi. We are concerned by reports, reiterated a moment ago by our new colleague from Burundi, of the destabilizing presence in Burundi of Interahamwe and the ex-Rwandan Armed Forces, who have moved from the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a result of the Lusaka ceasefire. In essence, the front line seems to have migrated, at least in part, to Burundi.

Peace in Burundi is unlikely to be achieved on a durable basis in the absence of a settlement to the conflict in neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. I therefore take this opportunity to urge all parties to the Lusaka agreement to respect in detail their commitments. It is imperative that efforts to restore peace throughout the subregion receive the full support of the international community and, of course, of the Council.

For its part, the Government of Burundi must intensify its efforts to achieve national reconciliation involving all parties to the conflict. While the international community has demonstrated in the past its willingness to assist, it is, and it must remain, primarily the people of Burundi who are responsible for achieving a durable peace in their country.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing what we consider to be an extremely useful open briefing on and discussion of a vitally important subject of such immediate concern to the broader membership.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): We welcome the opportunity of this debate, during which the representative of Finland will speak later on behalf of the European Union, and whose intervention my delegation fully supports.

As Assistant Secretary-General Fall told us earlier, the situation in Burundi is becoming increasingly complex and precarious. The recent outbreaks of violence, including against humanitarian workers; the sad death of Mwalimu Nyerere; and the continuing slow pace of progress in the Arusha process all cause serious concern.

The most immediate priority is to alleviate the suffering of the people of Burundi. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees told members of the Council yesterday, the humanitarian situation is becoming increasingly serious. Aid organizations have had to scale

down their activities and are now unable to deliver even emergency relief outside Bujumbura. Access and security for aid workers must be ensured, and quickly, if a massive humanitarian crisis is to be avoided. The Government of Burundi must make every effort to create conditions to allow the people in the regroupment camps to return to their homes as soon as possible. We listened extremely carefully to Assistant Secretary-General Fall's expression of concern about the situation in the regroupment camps.

The persistent violence against civilians in Burundi is unacceptable. I cannot underline this too strongly. We utterly condemn the deliberate killing of United Nations workers and Burundi nationals in Rutana in October. The Government of Burundi must bring those responsible for this massacre to justice and cooperate with other investigations into this incident. The establishment of the strengthened ad hoc commission, announced to us today by the representative of Burundi, is welcome, but it must produce results. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect the human rights of all people in Burundi and to abide by international humanitarian law.

The leaders of Burundi know the way forward. Only a negotiated settlement can bring lasting peace, stability and prosperity to their country. There is no military solution. All parties, including those previously excluded from the Arusha process, must reject political violence and extremism. They must dedicate themselves to a negotiated settlement. There is a lot to be gained. The risks of failure — for Burundi, for its people and for the region — are immense.

We commend and support the role being played by the regional States in the search for a negotiated solution. It is, to say the least, unfortunate that the regional meeting to agree on a new facilitator has been postponed to late November. This timetable must not slip any further. We urge all concerned to show flexibility and to engage constructively as a new facilitator is found. Nor should the continuation of the talks and the selection of a new facilitator be held up by groups in Arusha unrepresentative of the parties in the conflict. The new facilitator must have the flexibility to adapt and improve the Arusha process if he deems it necessary to ensure success, including by changing the representation at the talks and by altering their administrative procedures.

Finally, we welcome the fact that Under-Secretary-General Prendergast is consulting the regional States as they appoint a new facilitator. At this critical juncture the United Nations should be more actively engaged at the political and humanitarian levels. There must be a concerted push by the United Nations, by the regional States, and, most importantly, by Burundi's own political leaders. Only that will succeed in translating the modest gains made by the Arusha process into a real victory for the people of Burundi. We stand ready to support them in whatever way we can.

Mr. Al-Dosari (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to thank Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for his excellent briefing on the situation in Burundi.

It is regrettable that the situation in Burundi in all its aspects — political, economic and humanitarian — is deteriorating in a most dangerous and adverse manner. The death of Mwalimu Nyerere has left a vacuum in the political arena of Burundi, and we believe this to be a major factor in the deteriorating situation in Burundi. However, it is not the principal factor.

With his experience and wisdom, the Facilitator Mwalimu Nyerere was able to some extent to calm the situation in Burundi by bringing the parties to the conflict to the negotiating table and involvement in the Arusha peace process. However, it seems that the political partners, as Mr. Fall called them, did not have the necessary political will to reach an agreement on national reconciliation that would respect the fundamental rights of all citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin. The slow progress made so far in the peace process, which had been taking place under the leadership of Mwalimu Nyerere, makes clear that lack of political will.

My delegation calls on all the parties to choose peace as a means of settling their differences. The international community will not permit the use of force to settle the crisis in Burundi. In this context, we call on the parties to end all acts of violence likely to exacerbate the crisis in Burundi, cause delay in the peace process and, indeed, undermine it. Moreover, we look forward to the rapid appointment of a new facilitator in the peace process to replace Mwalimu Nyerere. This is necessary if we are to maintain the momentum achieved by Mwalimu Nyerere in the peace process. We look forward to Under-Secretary-General Prendergast's visit to the region soon in order to help find a successor to Mwalimu Nyerere.

We are concerned about the acts of violence taking place in the capital, Bujumbura, and in some of the provinces of Burundi, but we are especially worried

about the humanitarian tragedies suffered by the people of Burundi as a result of these acts of violence. We call on the parties concerned, including the Government, to allow humanitarian aid to reach all refugee areas, particularly the 13 assembly areas that lack food and medicine, which are necessary if epidemics or humanitarian tragedies are to be avoided there. At the same time, we appeal to the international community to provide the necessary humanitarian aid to Burundi immediately. My delegation strongly condemns the killing of humanitarian aid workers. We call on the Government of Burundi to make the utmost effort to bring to justice the perpetrators of those heinous acts. We also call on the Government of Burundi, as well as the other parties, to make every possible effort to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel, as well as international aid workers.

In conclusion, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate and to thank Mr. Fall once again for his briefing. We look forward to a further meeting in the future, following the visit of Mr. Prendergast to the region.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*spoke in French*): The situation in Burundi is difficult. Mr. Fall's statement was instructive. We should like to thank him for his account of the situation, which, once again, was as precise as it was rigorous.

The death of the Facilitator of the Arusha peace process, Julius Nyerere, has brought about a period of uncertainty. The increased violence on the part of armed rebel groups, in particular around Bujumbura, has heightened tension. Like those that have already spoken, the French delegation is concerned about these developments. We condemn the attacks by the rebel groups against civilians and humanitarian organizations. We deplore the human rights violations that are accompanying this increase in tension.

Despite these difficulties, the reconciliation process, both internal and external, must resume and must make progress. The international community must help the people of Burundi achieve reconciliation. We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative of this debate, which provides the Security Council with the opportunity to consider what part the United Nations can play in this regard.

I should like to contribute by offering several suggestions that may be able to guide the Council's actions. These are ideas that resulted from the recent visit to the Great Lakes region, including Burundi, of Mr. Charles Josselin, the Minister of Cooperation and La Francophonie.

First, it is essential that the reconciliation process be based on what has already been achieved within the context of the Arusha negotiations. France pays tribute to the work carried out by Julius Nyerere. We hope that mediation will resume as soon as possible. We support the efforts made by the Secretary-General, through the dispatch of an envoy, Sir Kieran Prendergast, to help to put the external process back on track.

It is also essential for all the parties, especially the armed rebel groups, to participate in the negotiations with a view to finding a settlement. Halting the fighting is, of course, a priority.

Finally, the resumption and continuation of the process must be supported by the international community in concrete and material terms. Burundi is experiencing a situation of tension that is being aggravated by economic difficulties, as the representative of Burundi has emphasized. It must break out of the vicious circle. The delegation of France would like to emphasize here that progress in the peace process must be accompanied by international assistance for reconciliation, reconstruction and democratization.

In conclusion, the Council must bear in mind the linkage with the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The implementation of the Lusaka Agreement is necessary if the full and complete recovery of Burundi is to be achieved. In the coming weeks, the Council must therefore consider the connection between the implementation of the Lusaka process and the resumption of the process that began with the Arusha negotiations.

I should like to thank the representative of Argentina for his support for what might be considered a reasonable goal for the international community: the holding of a conference on the Great Lakes, sponsored jointly by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are further speakers on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.